

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

Is the U.S. Policy on Global Terrorism Effective against Osama bin Laden and his Asymmetrical War on the United States?

by

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this paper is to answer the question "Is the U.S. policy on Global Terrorism Effective against Osama bin Laden and his Asymmetrical War on the United States?" This paper will analyze the current U.S. policy to defeat terrorism and then compare this policy to Osama bin Laden and his al - Qaeda terrorist organizations' most recent terrorist attacks to see if this new policy will be effective. The paper will conclude with a review of the U.S. policy towards terrorists and make, if necessary, recommendations for possible modifications to that policy.

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IS THE U.S. POLICY ON GLOBAL TERRORISM EFFECTIVE AGAINST OSAMA BIN LADEN AND HIS ASYMMETRICAL WAR ON THE UNITED STATES?

The purpose of this paper is to answer the question “Is the U.S. Policy on global terrorism effective against Osama bin Laden and his asymmetrical war on the United States?” I will first review the U.S. policy on Global Terrorism as stated in the current National Security Strategy. The paper will then discuss, in detail, bin Laden and his al – Qaeda terrorist organization and they will be used as the basis for analysis. The analysis will evaluate what we have done to attack bin Laden and the al – Qaeda and what we should do in the future. The analysis will conclude with an evaluation of how effective the United States has been, and what needs to be done to become more effective in the future. The framework to conduct this analysis will be taken from the National Security Strategy and President Bush’s stated priority “to disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations of global reach and attack their leadership; command, control, and communications; materiel support; and finances.”¹ The paper will conclude with my findings and recommendations on whether the United States policy has been effective against bin Laden and his terrorist organization al-Qaeda, and how it could increase its effectiveness in the future.

The National Security Strategy addresses several difficult tasks and responsibilities that have to be accomplished if we are to win the war on terrorism. An analysis of whether the policy has been effective on bin Laden’s terrorist organization – al-Qaeda, is also a difficult task because the war on terrorism, which will prove to be a very long war, is still in its infancy.

The National Security Strategy, dated September 2002, contains the President’s current guidance for defeating terrorism. It states that the priority for the United States in dealing with terrorists is “first to disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations of global reach and attack their leadership; command, control, and communications; material support; and finances. This will have a disabling effect upon the terrorists’ ability to plan and operate.”² This paper will only analyze this stated priority of the United States in our war on terrorism. The National Security Strategy also goes on to discuss how the United States will wage a war of ideas to assist in the battle against terrorism, but that will not be the focus of this paper.

The National Security Strategy’s plan to defeat terrorism is not a sequential plan but rather a plan whose cumulative effects will help achieve the desired effects on terrorism. The National Security Strategy outlines guidance that is designed to disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations by: (1) Direct and continuous action using all the elements of national and international power. The country’s immediate focus is on terrorist organizations that possess a global reach and any terrorist or a state that sponsors terrorism that will attempt to use a

weapon of mass destruction. (2) Defend the United States, the American people, and our interests at home and abroad by destroying the threat before they can strike. The plan also states that although the United States will constantly strive to enlist the help of our allies that does not preclude us from acting alone, including preemptive attacks. (3) Deny further sponsorship and sanctuary to terrorists by convincing or compelling states to accept their sovereign responsibilities.³

The use of force, or the perceived threat of the use of force, is a very powerful tool in the war on terrorism. Additionally, the ability of the United States to build a coalition is very important because that ability to apply force on one country by two or more countries gives the action some legitimacy in the eyes of many of the people in the world. The ability to build a coalition can not be under stated. It is essential for the United States to build and maintain a coalition throughout the war on terrorism. The United States has the support of NATO and while this support does improve the U.S. strike capabilities, it also provides additional political and diplomatic consent. However, the critical allies for the U.S. are the governments in the Islamic world. These governments would assist in providing intelligence, the essential element in winning the war on terrorism, as well as possibly retarding bin Laden's ability to recruit more Islamic men.

The United States has been concerned about bin Laden and his terrorist organization, al – Qaeda, for a number of years. This concern is a result of their terrorist acts as well as their stated policies towards the United States and her allies. On February 22, 1998, bin Laden issued a “fatwah”, his interpretation of Islamic law, that it was the duty of all Muslims to kill Americans and their allies. As a result of the fatwah, and other similar fatwahs, there have been attacks by al-Qaeda and other terrorist's organizations against the United States and her citizens in several areas around the world, including Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Yemen.⁴

In order to conduct an analysis of whether the United States policy on terrorism has been, and will continue to be, effective against bin Laden and his al – Qaeda terrorist organization we must also research bin Laden and al – Qaeda and form a basic understanding of their goals and objectives. This understanding will form the base of knowledge that will be used to compare the U.S. National Strategy to defeat terrorism.

Osama bin Laden is one man. He isn't the head of a country and he operates in many different areas throughout world. These facts make it extremely difficult to fight him using the conventional ways the United States fights its' wars. He has no borders, no set economy to attack, and very few soldiers when compared to countries the United States has fought in the past. Estimates show that al – Qaeda, which will be discussed in detail later in the paper, may

have had as few as 2,000 members in Afghanistan when the war started.⁵ These estimated 2,000 members, really fighters, isn't a significant force in terms of size but they are a significant force when it comes to their soldier and survival skills in Afghanistan coupled with their fanatical willingness to die for their cause. Bin Laden's other forces, an unknown number of men, believed to be organized in "sleeper" cells spread throughout the world, pose even a larger threat to the U.S. and the rest of the world. It is believed that these cells will continue to train and operate in their designated countries until they get the attack order. Trying to attack these cells, and even defend against the attacks these cells are executing, appears to be an overwhelming task for some of the best intelligence networks in the world. Bin Laden also has alliances with many other terrorist organizations in the world, although most can be found in the Middle East or other countries whose goal is to impose a Muslim rule.

Bin Laden provides his direct military threat through an organization known as "al Qaeda" (the base). This organization was formed by bin Laden in the 1980's and it consists of ex-Mujahideen and other supporters of bin Laden. The primary mission of al -Qaeda is to eliminate any presence of the United States and it's allies from Saudi Arabia, other gulf countries, and Somalia. Al- Qaeda has three reasons for eliminating U.S. presence from the region. "First, they regard the people of the United States as "infidels" because we do not live, or govern, by the group's extremist interpretation of Islam. Second, the U.S. is viewed as providing essential support to other "infidel" governments and institutions, particularly the governments of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, and the United Nations, all of whom are considered enemies of bin Laden. Third, al- Qaeda opposed the involvement of the United States in the Gulf War in 1991 and in Operation RESTORE HOPE in Somalia from 1992-1993. These two events were viewed by bin Laden as a preparation by the United States to occupy Islamic countries in the region. Fourth, al-Qaeda opposed the United States Government because of the arrest and confinement of people belonging to al-Qaeda."⁶

From the time al - Qaeda was formed, until approximately 1991, they had established their headquarters in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 1991 al - Qaeda moved their headquarters to the Sudan and it remained there until approximately 1996. During this time, al - Qaeda also continued to maintain offices throughout the world and they began establishing legal businesses which were to provide income to the organization as well as provide cover to al – Qaeda members. After being kicked out of the Sudan in 1996 the group moved its' headquarters back to Afghanistan.⁷

Al-Qaeda normally functions independently but will interact with other terrorist organizations who share a common hatred of the United States and her allies. "Some of the

terrorist organizations that they will sometimes operate with, or with the support of, include: the Al-Jihad, the Al-Gamma Al-Islamiyya Egyptian Islamic Jihad, and a number of jihad groups in other countries, including the Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Somalia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bosnia, Croatia, Albania, Algeria, Tunisia, Lebanon, the Philippines, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, the Kashmiri region of India, and the Chechen region of Russia.⁸

Al-Qaeda also has kept elements, or cells, in several other countries. These cells have the responsibility to plan and execute current and future operations. These cells are located in Kenya, Tanzania, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. By working together with other terrorist organizations and by sharing intelligence against their common enemies in the West - particularly the United States, al - Qaeda hopes to increase the pressure on the United States and her allies and force them from the region. "Al-Qaeda has responded to the presence of United States armed forces, and the armed forces of other allies in the Gulf region, and the arrest, conviction and imprisonment in the United States of persons belonging to al-Qaeda by issuing fatwahs indicating that attacks against U.S. interests, domestic and foreign, civilian and military, are both proper and necessary "⁹. As was stated earlier in this paper, these fatwahs have resulted in attacks against U.S. citizens around the world, including countries in the Gulf region, Africa and now in the United States. Since 1993, bin Laden and his al - Qaeda organization have been responsible for the death of thousands of people.¹⁰ "According to a current indictment against bin Laden, from 1992 on, bin Laden and other al - Qaeda members stated privately within the organization that a) al Qaeda should put aside its differences with Shiite Muslim terrorist organizations, including Iran and its affiliated terrorist group Hezbollah, to cooperate against the perceived common enemy, the United States and its allies; b) the US forces stationed on the Saudi Peninsula, including both Saudi Arabia and Yemen, should be attacked; and c) the US forces stationed in the Horn of Africa, including Somalia, should be attacked".¹¹ With these statements and subsequent actions bin Laden has basically declared war on the United States.

Al-Qaeda is organized with bin Laden, at the top, and immediately below bin Laden is the Shura majlis, a form of senior council for bin Laden. There are four committees - military, religious-legal, finance, and media - that all report to the majlis.

The chain of command from bin Laden down to the majlis is what would be referred to as a formal chain of command. All of the members that report up through the various committees are what would be referred to as an informal chain of command. This type of system maximizes security. Security has been paramount in bin Laden's mind because of his fear of al - Qaeda being penetrated by western countries. This fear started with the embassy bombings in Africa

and escalated after the attacks on 9/11. Operational decisions have become more secretive with only bin Laden and a few of the senior leaders of al – Qaeda having full knowledge of the mission.¹²

All of the members of these committees are personally selected by bin Laden or other senior members of al – Qaeda, especially the military committee. This military committee is the group that carries out special missions for bin Laden and the senior leaders within al- Qaeda. Bin Laden had planned on expanding his organization and their operations but he has delayed that plan based on the U.S. reaction to the attacks on 9/11.¹³

Al-Qaeda membership, before the war in Afghanistan was estimated at between 3,000-5,000 men. As was stated earlier, the estimated number of al – Qaeda in Afghanistan fighting with the Taliban was estimated at approximately 2,000. Before the war in Afghanistan started al – Qaeda had terrorist training camps spread across the country, including camps in Khost, Mahavia, Kabul, Jalalabad, Kunar, Kandahar, and depots in Tora Bora and Liza. Over the last year they have lost many of these members and their exact numbers can only be guessed. Also, the camp locations have moved as the members of al–Qaeda and the Taliban have been killed or forced to exfiltrate out of those areas. Another number that is not known, but is believed to be significant, is the number of new members that have been recruited because of the war in Afghanistan against America and her allies. Additionally, there are no female members.¹⁴

Bin Laden's base for recruitment came from the former Mujahideen, who obtained their war fighting experience in the war against the Soviet Union. These fighters are devout Muslims who are willing to sacrifice their lives for Islam. This group forms the nucleus of his military forces. Other members of al-Qaeda are formed into support and operational cells that have been detected and destroyed in numerous countries, including Italy, Germany, UK, Canada, USA, Tanzania, Kenya, Yemen and Albania. These cells are believed to have been replaced with additional cells having been identified in approximately 50 other countries including Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, and the Philippines.¹⁵

Bin Laden's broad ideological vision is appealing to Islamic Middle Eastern and non-Middle Eastern groups. This broad appeal also assisted in the creation of al – Qaeda's very extensive operational and support infrastructure. To create this broad base of support bin Laden sent several hundred of his Mujahideen fighters to assist other Islamic terrorists groups in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. By doing this bin Laden hoped to enhance those groups' ideals and appeal to both their home countries population as well as other international terrorist organizations.¹⁶

“Bin Laden supports three types of groups. First, groups fighting regimes led by Muslim rulers which they believe are compromising Islamic ideals and interests (as in Egypt, Algeria and Saudi Arabia). Second, groups that are fighting regimes perceived as oppressing and repressing their Muslim populace (as in Kosovo, India and Indonesia). Third, groups fighting regimes to establish their own Islamic state (as in Palestine, Chechnya, Dagestan and Mindanao).”¹⁷ Bin Laden’s main effort over the last several years has been against the United States, a country that he feels is the greatest threat to Islam. Of the groups listed above, his fight against the United States falls into the first group, with his group fighting the Saudi Arabia regime which he perceives is backed by the United States. Bin Laden also lists Europe, Israel, Russia and India as important targets for his al –Qaeda organization.¹⁸

This paper will now analyze how effective we have been, and will be, against bin Laden and his al – Qaeda organization. This will be done by comparing President Bush’s stated priority “to disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations of global reach and attack their leadership; command, control, and communications; materiel support; and finances”¹⁹, against the actions taken by the United States and our allies to defeat bin Laden and al - Qaeda.

ATTACKING LEADERSHIP

Militarily, the United States has been involved in a ground war in Afghanistan since President Bush ordered military action against al – Qaeda and Taliban forces on 7 October 2001. This operation was/is designated Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and initially was an air operation to gain air superiority, weaken militarily the al Qaeda and Taliban forces on the ground, and to support and encourage the anti-Taliban forces, known as the Northern Alliance. It was also hoped that this action would lead to a quick capture, or killing, of their leader, Osama bin Laden.²⁰

The U.S. military put bin Laden in its sights following the 1998 East African embassy bombings. President Clinton ordered cruise missile strikes on terrorist training camps associated with bin Laden in Afghanistan and on a suspected chemical weapons factory that bin Laden owned in the Sudan. These strikes didn’t have a significant impact on bin Laden’s operational ability, and the U.S. reverted to its containment policy of dealing with bin Laden. This policy relied on intelligence agencies, both U.S. and allied Arab countries, to gather intelligence on future attacks and foil them before they were initiated. The U.S. also tried to use Pakistan’s close relationship with the Taliban to force Afghanistan to extrude bin Laden but that plan failed.²¹

Shortly after the attacks on 9/11, President Bush said that he wanted bin Laden "dead or alive." Since President Bush's comments about wanting bin Laden "dead or alive" the United States has spent a huge amount of resources, in money, personnel and equipment, trying to capture or kill bin Laden. After the initial efforts of the United States failed to capture or kill bin Laden, the Pentagon has tried to focus the public's attention on our military successes in Afghanistan and away from our failure to capture or kill bin Laden. Our national leaders have also stated publicly that bin Laden may not be as important a target as was initially believed. Initially, it was hoped that the quick capture or killing of bin Laden would have a crippling affect on al – Qaeda, but President Bush and other administration officials quickly realized that would not be the case. President Bush has since stated that the war on terrorism would not end with bin Laden's capture or death because al – Qaeda has a chain of command where someone will step in and take his place.²²

The United States and its many allies fighting in Afghanistan have killed or captured several al – Qaeda leaders. The highest ranking al – Qaeda member killed in the war in Afghanistan has been Atef, al-Qaeda's military chief. Atef was very close to bin Laden, in fact they were "family"; Atef's daughter married bin Laden's son. Atef was a cold-blooded strategist charged with carrying out bin Laden's deadly orders. He was the primary planner of several of al – Qaedas' most notorious attacks, including the ambush of the Army Rangers in Somalia in 1993, the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the attacks on 9/11. It is believed that Atef's operations were responsible for more than 5,000 deaths.²³

The highest level al – Qaeda member that has been captured to date is Abd Al-Rahim al-Nashiri, a senior al- Qaeda leader described as the chief of operations in the Persian Gulf and one of the planners of the 1998 embassy bombings in Africa and the Oct 2000 attack on the USS Cole in Yemen. In his mid-30's, Nashiri reportedly has worked closely with bin Laden for over a decade. Nashiri was captured in November of 2002 at a foreign airport and has been very cooperative since his capture. Officials hoped information that he provided will help prevent future attacks but to date nothing significant has come from the information he's provided. Officials have described Nashiri as a ruthless operator who fought in Afghanistan in the 1980's and was with bin Laden in Afghanistan in the fall of 2001.²⁴

Another senior al – Qaeda leader, Abu Zubaydah, was captured on 28 March 2002 during a Pakistani led raid. During this raid Zubaydah sustained several wounds, but none of the injuries were life-threatening. It is believed that Abu Zubaydah was one of bin Laden's senior lieutenants and although we don't know what intelligence he provided, his capture was probably more of a public relations victory than a serious blow to al – Qaeda.

The last al – Qaeda leader worthy of mention is Ibn al-Shaykh al-Libi, a paramilitary trainer for al - Qaeda and one of 12 suspects whose financial assets President Bush froze. Pakistani forces captured al-Libi, a Libyan, attempting to cross from Afghanistan into Pakistan. Pakistani officials transferred him to U.S. forces who later discovered his identity. Al-Libi was the head of paramilitary training at al - Qaeda's Khaldan camp near the border with Pakistan. Al-Libi was questioned by U.S. forces for any possible intelligence he could provide as to the location of other top al - Qaeda officials and it was hoped that he might also be able to provide information on any future attacks on America and our allies.²⁵ To date, no significant intelligence has been provided by al-Libi.

The hunt for al – Qaeda's leadership, aside from bin Laden, hasn't been as fruitful as the United States and her allies would have liked. Although they have captured several high ranking members and have been able to kill others, most notably Atef, they haven't been able to capture or confirm the death of many of the leadership. Granted, many may have been killed and buried in the numerous caves found in Afghanistan, but that may never be confirmed. The United States has however, driven them "underground" which has limited the ability of al – Qaeda, and the Taliban, to operate within Afghanistan, and that has been a success story. It is likely that the United States did not realize at the start of the war in Afghanistan was just how big, and organized, al – Qaeda was world – wide. The successes the United States has had in capturing and killing leaders of al – Qaeda are tempered by the realization that their organization is structured so that there is someone capable of stepping in and taking over in the key leadership positions. As we have seen, al – Qaeda is still active in many locations throughout the world and they still pose a very serious threat.

The hunt for bin Laden has been very visible in the world press and has taken on an importance that doesn't help the cause of the United States. The United States has spent a lot of resources trying to capture bin Laden and the cost has not been worth the effort. When President Bush made the public statement that he wanted bin Laden "dead or alive" he made it very personal, and as many in the Muslim world saw it, an "infidel" against one of their own. America's popular support in the Middle East has never been strong, but this statement, coupled with the fact that many in the Muslim world feel the United States is unfairly, or blindly, supporting Israel against the Muslim world, makes matters even worse. This perceived personal attack by President Bush against bin Laden only served to raise bin Laden and his cause to a higher plateau in the Muslim world. President Clinton had a hand to play in this as well. Shortly after the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in August of 1998 President Clinton ordered the cruise missile attacks on bin Laden's terrorist training camps in Afghanistan.

and a suspected chemical weapons plant in Sudan, which was believed to be owned by bin Laden.

These attacks were conducted with the purpose of killing bin Laden, and obviously, they failed. What they did accomplish though was they raised bin Laden from a relatively marginal figure in the Middle East to almost a super hero to the Muslim community. These attacks resulted in more supporters for his al – Qaeda organization, including personnel for his army and money to fund operations.²⁶

The United States and our allies need to de-personalize the war on terrorism and the hunt for bin Laden and his al – Qaeda leadership. If we put a face to the war, a face of a Muslim, that hurts the U.S. position and strengthens his. The U.S. should hunt bin Laden and the al – Qaeda leadership, but it should be conducted in a more covert manner. It appears that, although the United States and its allies are winning decisively in Afghanistan, bin Laden still is winning the “propaganda” war because the U.S. has not caught him. To some in the Muslim world this is seen as a victory for bin Laden and is a source of support for him and his cause.

The United States knows that bin Laden has reduced his communications traffic to his subordinates and we should capitalize on that fact. While there needs to be some effort in the continued hunt for bin Laden, other resources need to start to identify, and kill, leadership elements in al – Qaeda cells located throughout the world. These cells have continued to operate, and it appears with no or very little new guidance, from bin Laden. This effort will take the combined resources of all of our agencies coupled with those of our allies. If we can destroy, or completely neutralize these cells, while also preventing the spread of anti U.S. sentiment, we will win the war with bin Laden and his al – Qaeda organization.

ATTACKING THEIR COMMAND, CONTROL, AND COMMUNICATIONS

Attacking the leadership of al – Qaeda and attacking their command and control are synonymous in almost every aspect. I will point out, again, that al – Qaeda is structured into many, very independent cells scattered throughout the world. They have an established chain of command that is deep and would reestablish command and control in the event of the death or capture of any of their leadership. What the U.S. doesn't know, but can assume, is that bin Laden anticipated a military response by the United States and had contingencies set in place when the United States did respond. These contingencies probably included future missions for the various cells throughout the world as well as command and control measures after the United States led attack. It would also appear from the attacks by al – Qaeda in different parts of the world that the contingency plans, at least some of them, were executed.

Communications, not just in Afghanistan, but world wide, have been a challenge for al – Qaeda since the United States began their attack. Al –Qaeda is still able to communicate with each other by various methods, but it has been degraded. Initially, they were using personal computers and cell phones to communicate but that has given way to runners, where feasible, and the use of computers at internet coffee shops. Although it hasn't been proven, it is also believed by some that bin Laden has communicated orders using a secret code in the couple of taped messages that he has released since our attack into Afghanistan. The United States must continue to limit their ability to communicate while at the same time applying more resources to identify their communication methods and intercept their communications when possible to aid in the intelligence gathering efforts.

Aside from bin Laden, the United States has had limited success in attacking the command and control of al – Qaeda. The U.S. led forces have killed, captured or have forced into hiding many of the leadership of al – Qaeda and this is believed to have limited their actions. What is unknown is who exactly has been killed or who has gone into hiding because we'll probably never know who was buried in the caves. The United States must continue their efforts, throughout the world, not just in Afghanistan, to force the leadership of al –Qaeda to react to their actions and prevent them from continuing their terrorist activities.

ATTACKING THEIR MATERIEL SUPPORT AND FINANCES

Immediately following the attacks on 9/11 President Bush announced that the response by the United States would not be limited to military retaliation or a law-enforcement investigation, but would also include actions that would target the financial network that facilitated and supported bin Laden and his terrorist organization al-Qaeda, and other known terrorist organizations.²⁷

The financial network of a terrorist organization is critical to the overall success of that organization. These organizations need large amounts of money to assist in recruiting, buying weapons, travel as well as for basic subsistence. How well the terrorist leadership raises and manages their money has a direct correlation to how well they will be able to wage their terror.

Osama bin Laden is not your typical terrorist leader. He hasn't built his terrorist organization, al –Qaeda, into the force it is today by leading from the front in battle or by being a battlefield hero. Instead, bin Laden's secret to success is in his ability to raise, manage and move money. Bin Laden did a superb job in this area during the Afghan War with the Soviet Union in the 1980's. It was during the war between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union that bin Laden fine tuned his ability to raise and manage money and it is this ability that gives him the

control over al - Qaeda that he enjoys today. When talking about bin Laden and money many people have focused on bin Laden's alleged \$300 million that he inherited from his family's construction business. It can be assumed that he has used some of his own money to finance his terrorist activities but of even greater value is the complex global financial network that he developed to fund the Mujahideen, which is still the same basic network that it was in the 1980's.²⁸

Bin Laden and his al - Qaeda organization raise money four ways. First are his legal businesses and investments found throughout the Arab World. "Bin Laden has businesses in Sudan, including a holding company, construction firms, agricultural businesses, investment firms, tanneries, and transportation companies. There has also been some speculation that bin Laden was involved with the massive short - selling of stocks in airlines, and insurance companies shortly before the 9/11 attacks".²⁹

The second way bin Laden and al - Qaeda make money is through criminal activities, including drug and cigarette smuggling and financial fraud. All of these activities are widespread and although not big money makers for them, they still are a source of funds.³⁰

The third way bin Laden and al - Qaeda make money is through donations from wealthy Muslims who share in their same Islamic extremist goals. The names of these wealthy Muslims are for the most part unknown but intelligence experts know that this is a very important aspect of their financial support mechanism.³¹

The fourth and most profitable way bin Laden and al - Qaeda make money is through fund-raising they conduct through charitable and nongovernmental organizations. This method of raising money has several significant advantages. First, millions of Muslims donate billions of dollars each year to organizations that they believe are legitimate charitable organizations. Second, most of this money is raised in the form of cash, which makes tracing the money almost impossible. Third, because most of these charities are associated with Islam they usually attract less attention from the authorities in Muslim states. Finally, because many of these charities are located throughout the world they facilitate the movement of people, money and equipment.³²

Once money has been raised by bin Laden and the al - Qaeda it has to be sent where it is needed the most. Al - Qaeda is structured with many decentralized cells scattered throughout the world and the money is sent to the cells that need the money the most to carry out the will of bin Laden and the al - Qaeda leadership. This money is moved using four basic techniques. The first is basic cash smuggling. Because most Middle Eastern countries conduct large cash transactions as a normal practice, much more so than the United States, Europe, and other

developed countries, many of the people in these areas will carry, and deal, with large sums of cash. As a result, the large cash transactions that would normally signal some sort of criminal activity in the United States is not going to do so in the Middle East.

The second technique that al - Qaeda uses to move money is the world banking system. They seek out under- regulated banks to hold and launder their money. These banks offer several, very attractive, advantages to the terrorists. They operate with strict customer secrecy, require no, or at best, poor customer identification, hidden trust information, and no supervision or examination of their transactions. Additionally, they do not report suspicious activity and they have little to no cooperation with law enforcement agencies.

The third technique that al - Qaeda uses to move money is the formal Islamic banking system. This is a legitimate banking system that was established for those people who, because of their religious beliefs, feel that paying interest violates their religion. Because this system is based on religion it usually has less regulation than other non-Muslim banks.

The fourth technique that al - Qaeda uses to move money is the *hawala* underground banking system. This system allows for cash transfers that leave little or no paper trail, and requires little or no government regulation or oversight. Again, there is nothing wrong with this system; it is a legitimate system that was established to protect traveling merchants from bandits. In this system a person gives his money to a *hawala* and that person contacts another *hawala* and they exchange money and the second *hawala* passes the money to intended person. At first glance one might think that this is a very informal system that handles very little cash flow in today's world of faxes, e-mails and wire transactions, but that assumption would be wrong. Pakistani bankers estimate that close to \$3 billion is brought into Pakistan every year by people using this system while only \$1 billion is brought into the country using the formal banking system.³³

The numerous ways that al - Qaeda raises and moves its money makes it extremely difficult for the United States and its allies to find and expose. When the United States is successful in this area the results have a limited affect on al - Qaeda and bin Laden. Although limited, these successes are important and when combined with the affects of military, diplomatic, intelligence and law enforcement actions can weaken bin Laden's and al - Qaeda's ability to wage terror campaigns.

Before the attacks on 9/11, the United States Government was already in the process of attacking the terrorist financial system. After the terrorist bombings of the United States embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, the Clinton administration initiated a new strategy in attacking al - Qaeda's financial network. This new strategy tried to link specific funds to specific

terrorist attacks. This allowed the United States Government, and its allies, to detain and arrest key individuals, shut down front companies and begin the important process of targeting banks that were providing laundering services to the terrorists.³⁴ Not all of the activities carried out by the United States Government are conducted in the open, and for good reason. An example of one such action that was conducted by the Clinton administration was the executive order invoking the Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). This act was focused on bin Laden and the al - Qaeda and was eventually expanded to include the Taliban. The IEEPA allowed the United States to instantly block any/all bank accounts in the United States that were linked to any of these groups. In addition to this, it also allowed the United States to bring sanctions against any business in the world that had dealings with these organizations.³⁵

These actions have lead to the seizure of approximately \$255 million of Taliban – controlled funding in the United States alone. This money, although significant, is not the most important aspect of the IEEPA. The most important aspect of the IEEPA is that it threatens supporters of these terrorists and terrorist organizations to comply with the rules established by the IEEPA or be cut off from the economy of the United States and her allies. One example of the success of this act is the ban on flights from Ariana Airlines. This airline was linked to the movement of terrorist money, equipment, and personnel to and from Afghanistan and because of pressure put on other governments by the United States there was an international ban on this airline, culminating with a U.N. Security Council resolution banning the use of this airline.³⁶

The United States and her allies in the G-7 have also worked together to identify countries and banking institutions that are under regulated. The goal is to identify institutions that provide, or could provide safe havens for terrorist money and expose them to the world as “non-cooperative with the global fight against money laundering”. As a result of this effort, many targeted countries were no longer issued bonds and some had their relationship with large financial centers like New York and London eliminated. Many of these countries immediately changed their banking laws and other countries, especially some in the Middle East, saw what had happened and changed their laws preemptively.³⁷

Although the United States has enjoyed many successes in the economic war on terrorism in the past, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done and there is a substantial effort underway in this area.

As was stated earlier in this paper, President Bush announced that the response by the United States to the attacks on 9/11 would not be limited to military retaliation or a law-enforcement investigation, but would also include actions that would target the financial network that facilitated and supported bin Laden and his terrorist organization al-Qaeda, and other

known terrorist organizations.³⁸ From September 11, 2001 through December 12, 2002 the Treasury Department has blocked \$123 million dollars of terrorist money throughout the world. (This does not include the \$255 million from the Taliban that was mentioned earlier.) \$36.2 million of this money came from within the United States while \$86.8 million came from other countries.³⁹ This not only shows how active, and productive, the efforts of the United States have been, but also demonstrates the support the United States has been receiving from countries throughout the world.

One of the many initiatives that have surfaced since 9/11 is a multi-agency financial enforcement initiative called "Operation Green Quest". This paper will discuss in some detail the specifics of "Operation Green Quest" as a vehicle to highlight one of the many initiatives that has developed over the last 15 or so months since the attacks on 9/11.

"Operation Green Quest", an initiative by the U.S. Customs Service, serves as the operational and investigative arm for the Office of Foreign Assets Control, the new Foreign Terrorist Asset Tracking Center, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, and other agencies and organizations that are tracking terrorist assets. Using leads from these organizations as well as leads developed independently, the operation has launched full-scale investigations which have resulted in seizures, blocking orders, civil and criminal forfeitures, criminal prosecutions, and other actions against individuals and organizations that have a financial relationship with terrorist organizations. A senior Customs official is the director of Operation Green Quest and a senior Internal Revenue Service (IRS) official is the deputy. A senior Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) official, two federal prosecutors from the Justice Department and nearly 30 special agents and analysts make up the remaining element of the operation.⁴⁰

"The goal of Operation Green Quest is to augment existing counter-terrorist efforts by bringing the full scope of the government's financial expertise to bear against systems, individuals, and organizations that serve as sources of terrorist funding. The initiative targets current terrorist funding sources and identifies possible future funding sources."⁴¹

Operation Green Quest focuses its efforts at the underground financial systems, illicit charities, and corrupt financial institutions that could be possible facilitators of terrorist funding. Operation Green Quest also targets counterfeiting, credit card fraud, fraudulent import/export schemes, drug trafficking, cash smuggling, and other activities that may fund terrorists.⁴²

Operation Green Quest uses undercover operations, electronic surveillance, outbound currency operations, and the exploitation of intelligence data, financial data, trade data, and confidential source data to conduct its investigations. The operation also draws on the

resources and expertise of the Treasury and Justice Departments and many other federal agencies, including the Customs Service, the Internal Revenue Service, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, the Office of Foreign Assets Control, the Secret Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and federal prosecutors from the Justice Department's Criminal Division. The Green Quest operations center also serves as a means to exchange data with the FBI and other agencies targeting terrorist finances to ensure that their activities are not duplicated by Operation Green Quest.⁴³

Operation Green Quest is only one example of several initiatives the United States has taken to attack terrorist's finances throughout the world since the attacks on September 11th. Operation Green Quest was used to highlight how successful this interagency operation is in fighting terrorism. This initiative, coupled with other new proposals, all work in conjunction with previous programs that had been operational before the attacks to deprive terrorists organizations and the people and countries that support the terrorists the funds needed to operate. It must also be understood that the United States is not conducting these initiatives and operations unilaterally. A vital aspect of these efforts is the cooperation of numerous countries; over 145 different countries have joined the fight against terrorism since the attacks on 9/11.⁴⁴ With their cooperation the United States and her allies can collectively strike at the terrorist funds and deprive them of their much needed cash flow. However, these efforts will never be one hundred percent effective, but as was stated earlier, these initiatives have seized or blocked over \$123 million of the terrorist's money world – wide since the attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. In addition to blocking and seizing the funds of the terrorists, these actions also cause the terrorist networks to expend more time and resources re-establishing networks that have been compromised. This activity alone causes the terrorists to take time and resources away from committing acts of terrorism and place those critical resources into the administrative actions of reestablishing these financial networks. Although these actions alone will never cause the defeat of the terrorists, they do, when coupled with the other elements of power, play a significant role in reducing the terrorist organizations day to day operating capability.

CONCLUSION / RECOMMENDATIONS

The 6 October 2002 attack on a French oil tanker off the coast of Yemen, the attack of a night club in Bali that killed more than 180 people from over ten different countries as well as the recent attack that killed a U.S Marine in Kuwait are all linked to al-Qaeda. President Bush stated that these recent attacks may indicate that al-Qaeda is beginning a new offensive against

the United States and that he is worried about future attacks on U.S. soil.⁴⁵ These attacks, and the call for more attacks by bin Laden, indicate that the war in Afghanistan has only scratched the surface in our war to destroy al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations throughout the world. In fact, it may be possible that our war on terrorism has acted as a force to unite different terrorist organizations against the United States and our allies. If this is true it could be a major setback in our war on terrorism.

To date, our current policy hasn't been effective against bin Laden and his al – Qaeda organization. Al-Qaeda is still a serious threat to the United States, both at home and abroad. Although the National Security Strategy outlines, in broad terms, how the President wants to fight the war on terrorism, a more specific plan is needed to fight and win the war.

This new plan must be a dramatic departure from how the United States and our allies have conducted the war on terrorism in the past. Future operations will require more covert operations to defeat the current terrorist threat posed by bin Laden and his al – Qaeda organization and these actions may not be popular with a potentially large percentage of people in the United States and our allies. This is because many will view these proposed actions as denying the terrorists their “human rights”.

WHAT ACTIONS MUST THE U.S. TAKE TO IMPROVE THE ATTACK ON THEIR LEADERSHIP AND C3?

President Bush has to expand the right for a preemptive strike against a country who threatens the United States to include preemptive strikes against individuals who pose a threat to the United States. He has agreed to a short list of names that represent senior al – Qaeda members, but this list must be expanded to include all terrorists. Once we, or our allies, identify an individual as a terrorist he should be killed. The exception should only be when that individual is providing some sort of intelligence through his actions. Once the terrorist outlives his usefulness he should be executed. An effort such as this needs to be synchronized at the highest levels of our government and include representation from all agencies that are involved in fighting the global war on terrorism. The same methodology that goes into a targeting meeting at the tactical and operational levels of war need to be applied to this selective targeting at the strategic level.

The U.S. needs to develop a strategy that calls for the relentless pursuit of these terrorists, and other terrorist organizations that are sympathetic to their cause, and destroy them. The need for preemptive attacks has never been stronger and they must be executed in such a manner that collateral damage is minimized while the total destruction of the organization(s) is complete. Coupled with these preemptive strikes is a need to minimize the

news coverage of these attacks. It appears that when attacks against terrorists are covered in the news it serves as a catalyst for additional support from other disenfranchised peoples. Reducing the number of disenfranchised people is not covered in this paper but is addressed in the National Security Strategy.

What Americans need to understand is that this isn't "normal" warfare. Terrorists don't fight according to any set rules and neither should we. If the United States adopted this kind of policy we wouldn't see "spokesman" for a terrorist organization holding press conferences or releasing statements claiming responsibility for a terrorist attack. It would be a valid assumption that after the first one or two were shot, it would be hard to find someone to take their job, and spill the lies of their organization. This policy of including all terrorists, not just the leadership will have a significant impact on their ability to command, control and communicate as well. If we are intercepting communications and then killing those terrorists it will certainly affect their ability to command and question their ability to communicate. These terrorists understand and respect violence, as do the people who support them, and that is what we should provide them. If we can keep them on the defensive, they'll have little time to plan terrorist attacks.

This change in policy would apply to any terrorist, but the ideal situation would be to apply this action against their leadership. In bin Laden's case the ideal situation would be to execute him covertly and then bury him in a cave never to be heard from again. If he is killed overtly, we then martyr him and this would actually strengthen the al - Qaeda cause. Again, the hunt for bin Laden must be publicly downplayed by the leadership of the United States. Every time the leadership of the United States says publicly that we are hunting him, bin Laden is seen as a victor over the United States because we have not caught him.

We must use all of our elements of national power to find and destroy these terrorist organizations. We should actively use all of our intelligence gathering resources, including the use of satellites, other "eavesdropping" equipment, all available HUMINT sources and specialized teams to conduct preemptive strikes, including elements of DELTA and the Navy Seals, against small terrorist cells and larger forces and/or more destructive weapon systems. Nations that sponsor terrorist organizations also need be dealt with in the same destructive manner. They, and other countries who are sponsoring terrorist organizations, or who are contemplating the sponsorship of a terrorist organization, must experience enough hardship that the thought of sponsoring terrorists is not conceivable. This hardship can be brought to bear in several different ways, but for the purpose of this paper it must be brought to bear by military force.

There should be no doubt that the U.S. will use overwhelming combat power to ensure the eradication of all terrorists from the face of the planet. Terrorists understand violence and how to maximize its potential and we should talk to them in terms they understand.

WHAT ACTIONS MUST THE U.S. TAKE TO IMPROVE THE ATTACK ON THEIR MATERIEL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT?

Bin Laden draws a majority of his support, people, materiel and finances, from the Muslim world. To date, the leaders of the Muslim world have not publicly spoken out against bin Laden and other terrorist organizations and they haven't done enough in policing their own countries. When was the last time Saudi Arabia caught and tried a Muslim extremist terrorist? Only these countries can change their internal banking laws to prevent the money laundering from taking place. Countries that do not take steps to reform their banking regulations should be punished by the United States and her allies economically. We can reduce imports/exports to these countries that will cost them money, the universal language. Make them take a public stand, they are either with the terrorists or they are with the U.S. and her allies. To win this war we need to separate these terrorists from their source of support and the only way to do this is from within the Muslim community. These countries also need to establish internal means of denying bin Laden his support base. Clearly, an important requirement from these Muslim countries is the identifying and punishing of the wealthy Muslim men who donate money to bin Laden and al – Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. The United States can freeze the assets of individuals and companies, but as has been discussed, there is more available money than we can freeze, and a lot of it is in cash. This must be done internal to the Muslim countries.

The Muslim countries of the world control the key to defeating terrorism - personnel and money. The first step in getting these Muslim countries to agree to provide greater assistance to the global war on terrorism will have to be made by the United States. The United States will have to adjust its current policy concerning the Middle East. The current U.S. policy is viewed by most of the Muslim world as strictly one – sided and very unfair in its treatment of the Palestinians. The U.S. will have to “move” closer to the middle in its support to Israel if it ever hopes to win over any of the Muslim world. After this is done the U.S. may need to approach these Muslim countries covertly and try to persuade them that supporting the U.S. efforts is the right thing to do. If this doesn't work the U.S. will need to publicly call on them to denounce these terrorists for what they really are – murderers. The more people we inform that these terrorists are murderers and represent a threat to everyone who doesn't believe in their radical interpretations of Islam the better chance we have of defeating them. The key to defeating

these terrorists lies in the ability to eliminate their financial resources, and this can only be done within the Muslim world.

In conclusion, this paper reviewed the history, organization and recent activities of bin Laden and his terrorist organization, al -Qaeda. Also discussed were ways to attack the leadership of al – Qaeda, including bin Laden; their command, control and communications apparatus as well as their materiel and support base.

In order for the United States to win the war on terrorism several changes must be made to the current National Strategy. These changes are listed in priority but where possible should be implemented simultaneously.

The United States must move to the center in its policy dealing with the Israel/Palestine issue. The current U.S. policy is viewed by the Arab World as one – sided in support of Israel. The U.S. will not receive the support it needs from the Arab World until this policy is changed.

The Muslim countries of the world need to restructure their banking laws to make it more difficult for terrorist organizations, and the people who support them, to resource terrorist activities. Funding is the center of gravity for terrorist organizations and to be successful the U.S. and her allies must severely limit the funds available to terrorists.

Preemptive strikes must be authorized against all terrorists. Once a terrorist has been identified and through his actions no longer provides a source of intelligence he should be executed.

This paper started out asking “Is the U.S. Policy on Global Terrorism Effective against Osama bin Laden and his Asymmetrical War on the United States?” The answer to this question is “No, it is not.” However, it is a start and with these recommendations it will be an effective policy and the U.S. will win the war on terrorism.

Word count=8,930

ENDNOTES

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